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Subject: Optometry benefits rate changes	Reference: Schedule of Optometry Benefits, Bulletins Opto 14-16	

To: all optometrists and billing staff

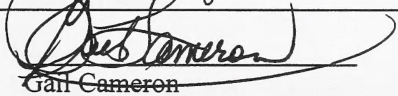
As the result of discussions and a new budget agreement between the Alberta Association of Optometrists (AAO) and Alberta Health and Wellness, a number of rate increases for insured optometry services will occur. These increases include:

- Reversal of a default price adjustment of 1.5 per cent in effect for services provided to seniors during the period **April 1, 2002 to December 31, 2002**, and 3.5 per cent for both seniors and children during the period **January 1, 2003 to March 31, 2003**.
- A rate increase of 3.9 per cent for all services retroactive to **April 1, 2003**.
- An additional rate increase of 2.9 per cent for all services effective **April 1, 2004**.
- A further rate increase of 2.9 per cent for all services effective **April 1, 2005**.

The following table shows the adjusted fees that now apply to services provided from April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003 and from April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004.

Health service code	Rates effective		Rates effective	
	April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003		April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004	
	Children age 18 & under	Seniors age 65 & older	Children age 18 & under	Seniors age 65 & older
B650	\$38.90	\$44.12	\$40.42	\$45.84
B651	25.74	29.19	26.74	30.33
B652 – B659	14.73	16.70	15.30	17.35
B660	38.90	44.12	40.42	45.84
B661	25.74	29.19	26.74	30.33

Alberta Health and Wellness will automatically reassess all paid claims for these date ranges to reflect the rates shown in the table. **There is no need for you to resubmit these claims.** This process should be completed by the end of April 2004. Due to the volume of reassessments required, they may appear over two or more of your Statements of Assessment. Claims affected by the default price adjustment will be reassessed with a new explanatory code 80BB. Claims with service dates starting April 1, 2003 will be reassessed with explanatory code 90A. The text of both explanatory codes is shown on page 2 of this Bulletin.

Contact: Claims Branch Telephone: Local (780) 422-0069 Toll Free 310-0000 Fax: (780) 427-1093	Approval:  Gail Cameron Position: Acting Director Claims Branch
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80BB OPTOMETRIC SERVICES DEFAULT PRICE ADJUSTMENTS

This is a repayment of benefits that were reduced by implementation of the default price adjustment mechanism in fiscal year 2002/2003.

90A PREVIOUS CORRESPONDENCE – MUTUAL INFORMATION

This claim has been assessed in accordance with correspondence or telephone call.

Enclosed for your reference is a copy of the Schedule of Optometry Benefits effective for dates of service starting **April 1, 2004**. In addition to the increased rates for insured services, please note the following changes:

- The descriptions of health service codes B652 and B653 have been amended to remove the terms “biomicroscopy” and “ophthalmoscopy”, respectively.
- General rule (GR) 1 has been organized alphabetically, and includes a new definition of “adult interdependent partner” (rule 1.1) and an amended definition of “optometrist” (rule 1.5).
- GR 3.3 has been deleted.
- GR 3.4 has been deleted and the information it contained merged into an amended GR 3.5, regarding skill code TPAC and modifier code TPAFB.
- In GR 5.2 regarding benefits for additional services, items d), g) and h) have been amended.
- GR 5.6 has been amended to include examination for low vision aid.
- New GRs 5.7 and 5.8 regarding diagnostic procedures and Alberta College of Optometrists requirements, respectively, have been added.

If you have any questions about the budget agreement or the repayment pertaining to the 2002/2003 default price adjustment, the AAO will be able to assist you. If you have questions regarding your Statement of Assessment or Statement of Account, please contact our In Province Claims staff in Edmonton at 422-1600. To call toll free, dial 310-0000 and at the prompt enter 780-422-1600.

The new Schedule of Optometry Benefits will be available in PDF format on the Alberta Health and Wellness website by the end of April. To view or download the schedule, log on to www.health.gov.ab.ca and click on the heading “For health professionals”.

Rate increases scheduled for **April 1, 2005** will be provided in a March 2005 Bulletin.